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INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

THE MOVEMENT OF SHIPPING AND CARGOES
INTO CAMBODIA DURING 1965

DIRECTORATE OF INTELLIGENCE

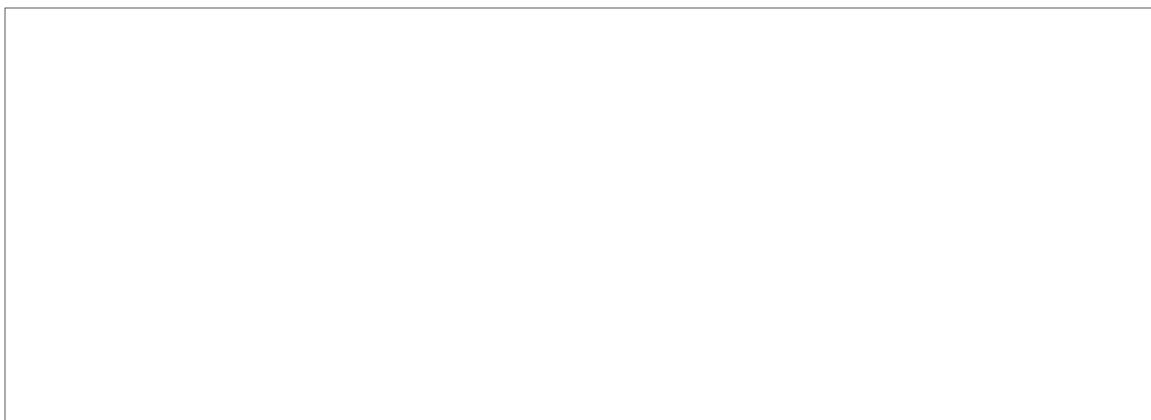
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THE MOVEMENT OF SHIPPING AND CARGOES
INTO CAMBODIA DURING 1965*

Summary

Most of the seaborne cargo arriving in Cambodia passes through one of the country's only two significant ports -- Sihanoukville on the Gulf of Siam or Phnom Penh on the Mekong River. In 1965, at least 275 ships called at Sihanoukville and discharged approximately 265,000 tons of cargo, most of it dry cargo. At Phnom Penh, 423 ships called and discharged about 279,000 tons of cargo -- 204,000 tons of POL and 75,000 tons of dry cargo.

Although only 22 of the ships that called at Sihanoukville in 1965 were of Communist registry, 65 percent of the cargoes discharged were loaded in Communist ports. Because of regulations on shipping proceeding up the Mekong River to Phnom Penh imposed by the government of South Vietnam in October 1964 and January 1965, no Communist-flag ships called at Phnom Penh in 1965, and only one cargo was discharged there after loading at a Communist port. The regulations on Mekong shipping probably contributed to the decline in the volume of dry cargo discharged at Phnom Penh in 1965 and to the increase in the volume discharged at Sihanoukville.

It is difficult to make an accurate estimate of the volume of military cargo discharged in Cambodia in 1965 because approximately 35 percent of the dry cargo discharged was unidentified. Of the 263,000 tons of dry cargo discharged at Sihanoukville, 110,000 tons were unidentified; of the 75,000 tons of dry cargo discharged at Phnom Penh, 15,000 tons were unidentified. The few identified military cargoes

* The estimates and conclusions in this memorandum represent the best judgment of this Office as of 1 March 1966.

that moved to Cambodia during the year were discharged at Sihanoukville and apparently were intended for delivery to the armed forces of Cambodia. Three of these military cargoes originated in Communist China and one each in Czechoslovakia and France.

1. Cambodian Seaports

Cambodia has only two significant seaports, Sihanoukville on the Gulf of Siam and Phnom Penh on the Mekong River almost 200 miles from the sea. Sihanoukville, which began operations in 1960, is a modern port capable of handling cargo liners up to approximately 15,000 dead-weight tons (DWT) (see Figure 1). Phnom Penh is a much older port which can handle only vessels up to 6,000 DWT because of draft limitations. Although more ships called at Phnom Penh in 1965 than at Sihanoukville, 423 compared with 275, Sihanoukville handled a greater volume of cargo, 755,000 tons compared with 592,000 tons at Phnom Penh (see Table 1). At both ports the volume of cargoes loaded exceeds the volume of cargoes discharged. For this reason it is not uncommon for ships coming into these ports to be in ballast or only partly loaded. Such ships usually load export cargoes of rice, maize, wood, or rubber. Only three of the lesser ports in Cambodia are known to handle foreign trade cargoes -- the twin ports of Tonle Bet and Kompong Cham upstream from Phnom Penh on the Mekong, and Kampot on the Gulf of Siam. For the locations of ports in Cambodia, see the map, Figure 2.

2. Cargo Discharged at Cambodian Ports During 1965

A. Sihanoukville

The merchant ships that called at Sihanoukville during 1965 included tramps that arrived in ballast to load export cargoes; large cargo liners from Western and Eastern Europe (mostly French, Dutch, and Yugoslav); small liners from Singapore and Hong Kong; and tramps that arrived to discharge cement, coal, and a variety of other cargoes. Although Communist ships made only 22 calls at Sihanoukville in 1965, 50 of the 249 calls by Free World ships were made by ships under Communist charter. At least 40 of the calls were made by tramps under time charter to Sinofracht, the Chinese Communist chartering agency. Most of the ships under Chinese charter flew the Greek, British, or Norwegian flags. Twelve calls were made by Soviet, Dutch, and Norwegian tramps under charter to North Vietnam. A detailed breakdown of ship arrivals and cargo deliveries at Sihanoukville during 1965, by flag, is shown in Table 2.

About 65 percent of the 265,000 tons of cargo discharged at Sihanoukville during 1965 was loaded in Communist ports. The largest amounts came from Communist China (79,000 tons) and North Vietnam (45,000 tons). Significant quantities were also loaded in Bulgaria (19,000 tons) and the USSR (18,000 tons). The countries of loading, where known, for the cargoes discharged at Sihanoukville during 1965 are shown in Table 3.

The total tonnage discharged in Sihanoukville during 1965, by commodity, was as follows:

	<u>Thousand Metric Tons</u>
Cement	79
Coal	29
Metal products	13
Rubber (for transshipment)	12
Foodstuff's	9
Chemicals and explosives	5
Roasted pyrites	3
POL in drums	2
Other general and miscellaneous dry cargo	3
Unidentified cargo	110
Total	<u>265</u>

All of the cement delivered at Sihanoukville came from Communist countries, the largest amount from North Vietnam. Lebanese, Soviet, and British ships moved most of this cement. The coal delivered to Sihanoukville came from Communist China and Thailand in French, Lebanese, and Greek ships. Most of the metal products delivered at Sihanoukville came from Communist China and North Vietnam, in most cases on Greek and British ships.

The rubber discharged in Sihanoukville came from Indonesia in small Panamanian freighters. It apparently was brought to Cambodia so that it could be documented as rubber of Cambodian origin before being shipped to Singapore, where the importation of Indonesian rubber is prohibited.

Although there is no evidence that military cargoes reached Phnom Penh during 1965, either openly or covertly, a number of military cargoes were discharged at Sihanoukville. At least three Chinese Communist, one Czechoslovak, and one French ship took part in these deliveries. It appears that most or all of the cargoes were intended for delivery to the armed forces of Cambodia. They included Skyraider aircraft from France; material from Czechoslovakia for a small arms plant; and machine guns, mortars, and recoilless weapons from Communist China. Although the exact tonnage of the military cargoes is unknown, the magnitude of these shipments is suggested by the total tonnages of identified military cargoes and unidentified cargoes discharged by ships known to be carrying arms or suspected of carrying them, as shown in the following tabulation:

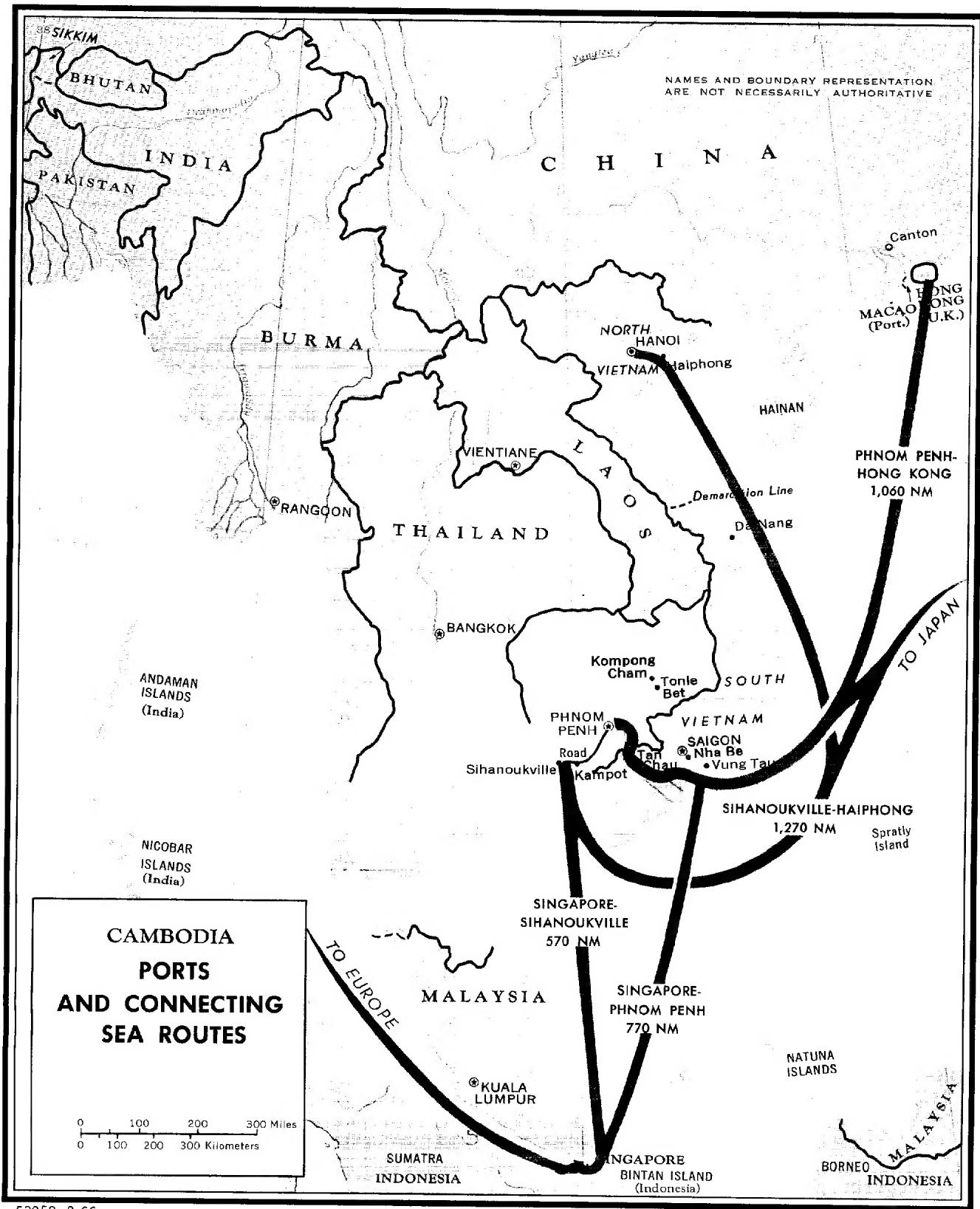
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FIGURE 1. CAMBODIA: THE PORT OF SIHANOUKVILLE

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<u>Country of Origin and Flag</u>	<u>Metric Tons</u>
Czechoslovakia	800
France	67
Communist China	11,252
Total	<u>12,119</u>

A number of French cargo liners discharged explosives loaded in Western Europe, but it is not known whether they were for civilian or military use.

More is known about the nationality of the ships that carried the 110,000 tons of cargo listed as unidentified than is known about the countries at which the cargoes were loaded. French, Greek, British, Panamanian, and Chinese Communist ships carried most of these cargoes. The countries of loading for 63,000 tons of unidentified cargo are known. Communist China, Singapore, and North Vietnam together account for over one-half of this amount. Much of the cargo from Communist China consisted of construction materials, chemicals, and consumer goods for which no specific data on tonnage are available. It is likely that the 47,000 tons of unidentified cargo for which no data on countries of loading are available includes rubber from Indonesia, liner cargo from Western Europe, and additional consumer goods from Communist China.

B. Phnom Penh

Under the terms of a tripartite agreement signed by Cambodia, Vietnam, and Laos in 1954, ships flying the flags of the contracting countries, and of the countries which recognize these countries diplomatically, are to be allowed freedom of navigation on the Mekong. This has special significance for seagoing ships bound for Phnom Penh because the mouth and lower reaches of the Mekong are in South Vietnam. Until late in 1964, South Vietnam did little to interfere with ships proceeding up the Mekong to Phnom Penh. A pilot and a customs official normally boarded the ship near the mouth of the river and accompanied it to the Cambodian border. Cargo manifests were examined in a cursory fashion, and no attempts were made to inspect cargo. The situation changed in October 1964, when the government of South Vietnam issued a new decree governing transit traffic on the Mekong. This decree included the following stipulations:

1. Commercial vessels were required to apply at the appropriate South Vietnamese customs office (Vung Tau for ships going up the river and Tan Chau for ships coming down) for authorization to transit the South Vietnamese sector of the river.

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2. No authorizations were permitted to ships (a) en route from Communist ports, (b) flying the flags of countries which do not recognize the government of South Vietnam (applied, at first, to all Communist ships but not to Cambodian ships), or (c) carrying weapons, ammunition, or commodities of military significance without advance permission from the Ministry of Defense.

3. A South Vietnamese pilot must be aboard at all times between the mouth of the Mekong and the Cambodian border.

4. South Vietnamese officials were authorized to inspect cargoes and customs papers, to seal holds, and, if necessary, to take commercial ships to Saigon for inspection and sealing.

During the first two months that the decree was in effect, South Vietnamese officials confiscated a consignment of cartridge belts aboard a Japanese ship bound for Phnom Penh and prevented six other Free World ships (mostly Japanese) from entering the river -- four carrying cement from the USSR and Communist China and two carrying chemicals of possible military significance.

In January 1965 the government of South Vietnam introduced the following changes in its regulations for shipping on the Mekong:

1. Cambodian vessels were denied access to the river because the government of Cambodia does not recognize the government of South Vietnam.

2. No authorizations were to be given to ships that have called at Communist ports since leaving their home ports.

3. All ships carrying cargoes of Communist origin regardless of flag and port of loading were to be detained with their holds sealed until the South Vietnamese Ministry of Defense investigated the circumstances.

During March 1965, South Vietnamese officials enforced the regulations forbidding the use of the lower Mekong by Cambodian ships and denied access to the two small Cambodian freighters that normally operate between Singapore and Phnom Penh. Beginning in April, however, the South Vietnamese stopped enforcing the regulations, and the Cambodian ships resumed their former activity on the Mekong.

Although it may not be entirely attributable to the South Vietnamese regulations on Mekong shipping, both the number of calls at Phnom Penh by dry cargo ships in 1965 and the volume of dry cargoes discharged from seagoing ships there were considerably lower than in 1964. The number of calls by dry cargo ships dropped from 372 in 1964 to 316 in 1965 and the volume of dry cargoes discharged dropped, from 147,000 to 75,000 tons, as shown in Table 4.

The total volume of cargo discharged at Phnom Penh in 1965 was 279,000 tons, slightly more than that discharged at Sihanoukville. This tonnage can be broken down as follows:

	<u>Thousand Metric Tons</u>
POL	204
General and miscellaneous	
dry cargo	60
Unidentified cargo	15
Total	<u>279</u>

Most of the POL delivered at Phnom Penh consisted of petroleum products delivered in bulk from one of two depots, an Esso storage facility on the Indonesian island of Bintan off Singapore and a Shell storage facility at Nha Be on the outskirts of Saigon. Approximately 40,000 tons came from Bintan and 155,000 tons from Nha Be. The Esso products were carried by a single Panamanian tanker operating on a shuttle basis, and the Shell products largely by two French tankers, also operating on a shuttle basis. In addition to the bulk shipments there were a number of deliveries of lubricants in drums from Singapore by Panamanian and French freighters.

The 60,000 tons of "general and miscellaneous" dry cargo consisted of identified general cargo for which manifests are available and of miscellaneous cargoes, including cement, metals, asphalt, and foodstuffs in relatively small amounts. The most important single source of general cargo was Japan. Most of the 33,000 tons of general and miscellaneous cargoes from Japan arrived on Japanese cargo liners. There were also significant quantities of general cargo loaded at the entrepôt ports of Singapore and Hong Kong. The actual origins of these cargoes cannot be determined in most cases, but it can be presumed that much of it had been discharged in Singapore and Hong Kong by liners from Eastern and Western Europe. Most of the dry cargoes coming from Singapore were carried by small Panamanian, Dutch, French, or Cambodian liners. More than one-half of the dry cargoes arriving from Hong Kong were carried by the Japanese liners that bring in cargo from Japan. The remainder was carried by small Panamanian, Cambodian, or British liners.

and tramps. A breakdown, by country of loading and by flag, of the 15,000 tons of unidentified cargoes discharged at Phnom Penh shows a pattern very close to that just described for general and miscellaneous cargoes.

C. Lesser Ports

The three lesser ports in Cambodia that handle foreign trade cargoes are concerned principally with the export of basic commodities produced in Cambodia. The two Mekong River ports, Kompong Cham and Tonle Bet, export rubber, and Kampot exports pepper. Kompong Cham and Tonle Bet also handle some incoming cargoes carried by seagoing ships. Some of the tankers that sail up the Mekong discharge petroleum cargoes at these ports, and some of the small freighters that come up the river to load rubber also discharge small consignments of general cargo. Kompong Cham also receives small amounts of general cargo on river craft that load in South Vietnam. It is likely that some cargoes are discharged at Kampot, but there is little reporting on either their nature or their volume.

Table 1
International Traffic Through the Chief Ports of Cambodia a/
1964 and 1965

Port	Ship Arrivals <u>b/</u>		Cargo Discharged (Thousand Metric Tons)		Cargo Loaded (Thousand Metric Tons)		Total Cargo Volume (Thousand Metric Tons)	
	<u>1964</u>	<u>1965</u>	<u>1964</u>	<u>1965</u>	<u>1964</u>	<u>1965</u>	<u>1964</u>	<u>1965</u>
Sihanoukville	237	275	187	265	528	490	715	755
Phnom Penh	497	423	322 <u>c/</u>	279 <u>c/</u>	393	313	715	592
Total	<u>734</u>	<u>698</u>	<u>509</u>	<u>544</u>	<u>921</u>	<u>803</u>	<u>1,430</u>	<u>1,350</u>

a. Data have been rounded to three significant digits. Because of rounding, components may not add to the totals shown.

b. Including only arrivals of seagoing ships from foreign ports.

c. Including cargo in transit for Laos.

Table 2

Ship Arrivals and Cargo Discharged at Sihanoukville and Phnom Penh, by Flag a/
1965

Flag	Ship Arrivals b/			Cargo Discharged (Metric Tons)		
	Sihanoukville	Phnom Penh	Total	Sihanoukville	Phnom Penh	Total
Communist countries	<u>22</u>		<u>22</u>	<u>60,400</u>		<u>60,400</u>
USSR	9		9	27,200		27,200
Eastern Europe						
Bulgaria	4		4	11,100		11,100
Czechoslovakia	1		1	799		799
Poland	2		2	5,200		5,200
Communist China	6		6	16,100		16,100
Free World	<u>249</u>	<u>421</u>	<u>670</u>	<u>203,000</u>	<u>279,000</u>	<u>482,000</u>
Cambodia	.9	26	35	2,960	2,870	5,840
France	62	111	173	38,600	153,000	192,000
Greece	15		15	29,200		29,200
India	4		4			
Italy	1		1			
Japan	20	52	72	5,370	50,000	55,400
Lebanon	7		7	28,300		28,300
Liberia	3	3	6	1,250		1,250
Malaya	1		1	9,920		9,920
Morocco	1		1			
Netherlands	8	13	21	1,650	10,100	11,800
Norway	16	2	18	16,700	1,310	18,000
Panama	48	170	218	28,300	60,200	88,500
Switzerland	4		4			
United Kingdom	31	42	73	32,000	1,450	33,400
United States		2	2			
West Germany	2		2			
Yugoslavia	17		17	8,580		8,580
Unidentified	<u>4</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>1,500</u>		<u>1,500</u>
Total	<u>275</u>	<u>423</u>	<u>698</u>	<u>265,000</u>	<u>279,000</u> c/	<u>544,000</u>

a. Data have been rounded to three significant digits. Because of rounding, components may not add to the totals shown.

b. Including only arrivals of seagoing ships from foreign ports.

c. Including cargo in transit for Laos.

Table 3

Cargo Discharged at Sihanoukville and Phnom Penh
by Country of Loading a/
1965

Country of Loading	Port of Discharge		Metric Tons
	Sihanoukville	Phnom Penh	
Communist countries	<u>173,000</u>	<u>1,310</u>	<u>175,000</u>
North Vietnam	45,400	1,310 b/	46,700
North Korea	10,800		10,800
USSR	18,100		18,100
Eastern Europe			
Bulgaria	19,300		19,300
Rumania	299		299
Poland	10		10
Communist China	79,400		79,400
Free World	<u>36,300</u>	<u>278,000</u>	<u>314,000</u>
France	920		920
Hong Kong	7,710	13,000	20,700
India		7,360	7,360
Indonesia	11,000	39,800	50,900
Japan	448	45,400	45,900
Singapore	8,960	15,500	24,500
South Vietnam	490	157,000	157,000
Thailand	1,490		1,490
West Germany	3,310		3,310
Yugoslavia	1,890		1,890
Unidentified	55,100		55,100
Total	<u>265,000</u>	<u>279,000 c/</u>	<u>544,000</u>

a. In some cases the country of loading is the same as the country of origin. However, in many cases it is the country at which the cargo was offloaded for transshipment. In such cases the country of origin is often unknown. Data have been rounded to three significant digits. Because of rounding, components may not add to the totals shown.

b. It is not certain why South Vietnamese authorities permitted this ship to sail up the Mekong. Its most recent port of call had been Haiphong, and under the October 1964 regulations in effect at that time ships whose most recent port of call was a Communist port were not to be given authorization to enter the river.

c. Including cargo in transit for Laos.

Table 4

Petroleum and Dry Cargo Traffic Through Phnom Penh a/
1964 and 1965

Year	Ship Arrivals b/			Cargo Discharged (Thousand Metric Tons)		
	Tankers	Dry Cargo	Total	POL	General and Miscellaneous Dry Cargo and Unidentified Cargo	Total
1964	125	372	497	175	147	322 c/
1965	107	316	423	204	75	279 c/

- a. Data have been rounded to three significant digits.
b. Including only arrivals of seagoing ships from foreign ports.
c. Including cargo in transit for Laos.

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